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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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**Marine Special Operations Helicopter Unit:  
Viability in the Joint Force of 2020**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MILITARY SCIENCE

**Major Lauchlin D. Byrd**

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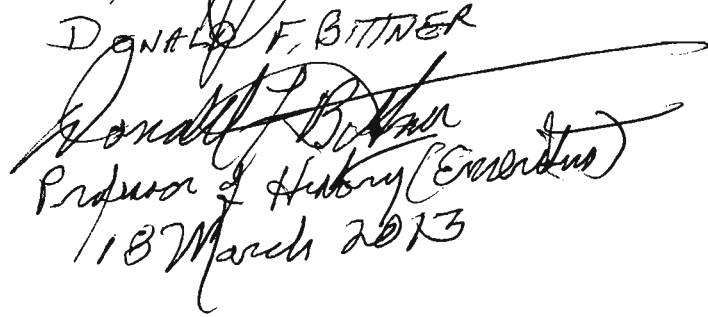
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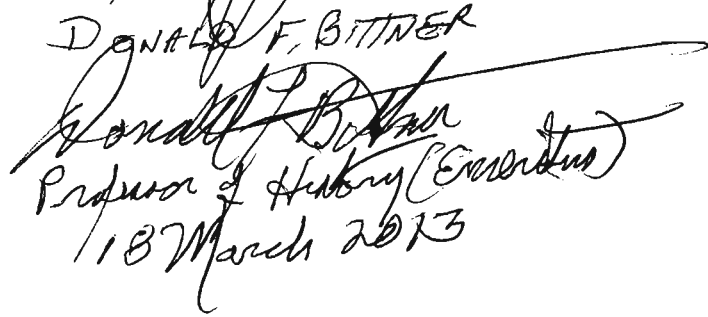
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## **Executive Summary**

**Title:** Marine Special Operations Helicopter Unit: Viability in the Joint Force of 2020

**Author:** Major Lauchlin D. Byrd, United States Marine Corps

**Thesis:** Fulfilling the gap in Marine Special Operations Command with a dedicated Marine special operations helicopter unit is necessary. Concisely, this will demonstrate that the establishment will lead to efficient execution of missions, and better prepare the Marine Corps for the Joint Force of 2020.

**Discussion:** Since its establishment on 24 February 2006, Marine Special Operations Command has lacked a dedicated rotary wing unit that is organized, trained, equipped, and postured to rapidly deploy in support of Marine Special Operations Forces. The addition of a Marine Special Operations Helicopter Squadron to Marine Special Operations Command requires creative initiatives with aggressive experimentation and implementation. As the Marine Corps restructures, emphasis on Special Operations Forces and their contribution to operations in an uncertain and increasingly competitive globalized environment will increase the requirements for aviation support. With a dedicated Marine Special Operations Helicopter Squadron, efficiency in planning, training, and execution will provide for precise timely and accurate organic fires, direct mobility support, and reduce the command and coordination requirements for the overall mission of the joint force.

**Conclusion:** Even with the looming sequestration of the Department of Defense, evident requirements for experimentation of new and innovative methods, to prepare for the future complex security environment, still remain. With utilization of the near and far term outlook, the development of a Marine Special Operations Helicopter Squadron will better prepare the Marine Corps for the strategic vision of the future.

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## *Preface*

The addition of a Marine Special Operations Helicopter Squadron to Marine Special Operations Command requires creative initiatives with aggressive experimentation and implementation. As the Marine Corps restructures, emphasis on Special Operations Forces and their contribution to operations in an uncertain and increasingly competitive globalized environment will increase the requirements for aviation support. With a dedicated Marine Special Operations Helicopter Squadron, efficiency in planning, training, and execution will provide for precise timely and accurate organic fires, direct mobility support, and reduce the command and coordination requirements for the overall mission of the joint force. Even as the Department of Defense continues its initiative in the transition to the Joint Force of 2020, reductions in the budget will continue to force innovative thinking. With a focus on filling the gap in Marine Corps Special Operations Command, with a dedicated rotary wing unit – organized, trained, equipped, and postured to rapidly deploy in support of Marine Special Operations Forces – increments to successful future missions will be met. Whether these missions are Anti Access/ Area Denial, or the various special operations missions within, a Marine Special Operations Helicopter Squadron will provide the key mobility and support for a successful Marine Air Ground Task Force in Marine Special Operations Command. Meeting the needs for a “responsive and scalable [force] that teams with other services, allies, and interagency partners,<sup>1</sup> does not end with the General Purpose Forces (GPF), nor does “aggressive experimentation and implementation [of] new capabilities and organizations.”<sup>2</sup> These theories should also be applied to Marine Special Operations Command, in order to further their self-sufficient unique capabilities, and assist in the overall strategic spectrum.

*“Let’s be honest, Marines fight as a MAGTF and we’ve always fought as a MAGTF. If you have a MARSOC that’s now a MAGTF MARSOC, what a capability on the battlefield. And that’s why I believe that someday you’ll see MARSOC as a MAGTF.”*

*-Lieutenant General Dennis J. Heglik*

### **Introduction**

Since its establishment on 24 February 2006, Marine Special Operations Command has lacked a dedicated rotary wing unit that is organized, trained, equipped, and postured to rapidly deploy in support of Marine Special Operations Forces. Historically, Special Operations Forces have lacked inherent aviation support, and it was not until the failed hostage rescue in Iran (Operation Eagle Claw) in April 1980 that identified the lack of “aircraft, pilots, or aircrews trained and prepared to carry out this type of mission.”<sup>3</sup> Along with this need, the U.S. Army – specifically Colonel Charlie Beckwith – pushed for unit cohesion between the aviation and ground special operators. This led toward a separation from the United States Air Force in special operations rotary-wing support. The separation, mandated in Initiative 17 of the 31 Initiatives, was predominately formulated on sheer numbers of rotary-wing assets as opposed to capabilities, and thus the transfer for the support shifted from the Air Force to the Army.

Contingencies against the development of a dedicated special operations force is present from the Marine Raiders to the “Nineteen Year Convergence Toward a Marine Component.”<sup>4</sup> Although, indirect positives such as the Commandant’s 237<sup>th</sup> Birthday Message, where he referred to the Marine Raiders as “legendary,” and in his Planning Guidance, where he stated, “We will fully embrace MARSOC and capitalize on its unique capabilities,” portray that the old adage against Marine Corps Special Operations Forces is diminishing. Current emphasis on the importance of Special Operations Forces, and the need “to inspire discussion, debate, and innovation during the capability identification and solution development process,”<sup>5</sup> there is no better time than now to exercise “entrepreneurial spirit.”<sup>6</sup> It is evident that with quantitative

information from all directives, the requirement to fulfill the gap in Marine Special Operations Command with a dedicated special operations helicopter unit is necessary. Concisely, this will demonstrate that the establishment will lead to efficient execution of missions, and better prepare the Marine Corps for the Joint Force of 2020.

### **Background of Rotary-Wing Aviation in Special Operations**

Prior to an actual United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) designation of a special operations aviation/ helicopter unit, special operations ground forces relied on conventional aviation forces to provide the required lift and fire support. However, even without an actual designation to be “special,” the operating forces established units capable of, what was considered at the time, special missions. In the aviation realm, prior to 1980, this was typically sourced by the United States Air Force in support of Army special operations units. Deriving from the Key West Agreement of March 1948, the first Secretary of Defense, James V. Forrestal, directed that the Army, Navy, and newly formed Air Force would “allocate responsibilities for military roles and missions.”<sup>7</sup> Most predominately was the strategic support of the Air Force to the Army, which was finalized in a later meeting in Newport, Rhode Island. In the end, the Key West Agreement established that the Army would continue to support its reconnaissance and medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) missions while the Air Force would support all other aviation support missions. As time progressed so did the operational and strategic visions of both services. Numerous readjustments and agreements were signed by both the Army and the Air Force from 1948-1981. During this time disagreements between the services on the roles of tactical and strategic aircraft, multi-role fighters and light close air support (CAS) aircraft, designation of helicopter only and fixed-wing only forces led to the most agreeable end state since the establishment of the Air Force in 1947, the Air-Land Battle Concept developed through the TAC-TRADOC, and the overall coordinating dialogue between the two commands.



The Air Force's Tactical Air Command (TAC) and the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) fostered a series of studies aiming to eliminate "Air Force and Army duplication of capabilities and ensuring both services ability to operate as an integrated combat team."<sup>8</sup> Between June 1973 and November 1976, TAC-TRADOC constituted three manuals, which defined the Air-Land Battle Concept and the overall post-Vietnam battlefield integration: Air Force Manual 2-14, Army Field Manuals 100-5 "Operations," and Field Manual 100-42 "Airspace Management." However, it was a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on "close surveillance of joint requirements,"<sup>9</sup> which was signed to provide further cooperation between the two services. Although remaining at an all time high, cooperation between the Army and the Air Force was about to encounter another hurdle during preparations for, what is now known as the first step in establishing Special Operations Command and the Special Operations Aviation Regiment, Operation EAGLE CLAW.

The decision to utilize Navy RH-53s in support of Army Special Operations Forces for Operation EAGLE CLAW was not solely based on the folding capability of the tail section for storage aboard ships. In fact, this can be traced back to the Air Force's helicopter usage during the Vietnam War. At the height of their fleet, the Air Force maintained the following helicopters between 1963 and 1974:

U.S. Air Force Helicopter Strength, Vietnam: 1963-1974					
Type	Number	Role	Type	Number	Role
UH-1	206	Utility/Troop Transport	CH-34	29	Cargo/Troop Transport
UH-19	160	Utility/Troop Transport	HH-43	167	Search & Rescue
CH-3	101	Cargo/Troop Transport	CH-53	55	Cargo/Troop Transport

Figure 1: U.S. Air Force Helicopter Strength, Vietnam: 1963-1974

Source: James C. Ruehrmund Jr. and Christopher J. Bowie, *Arsenal of Airpower: USAF Aircraft Inventory 1950-2009* (Arlington, VA: Mitchell Institute Press, 2010), 64-67.

Of these helicopters, the UH-1 and the CH-3 were utilized by the reestablished 20th Special Operations Squadron (SOS). Known as the "Pony Express," they operated the CH-3 in various

“unconventional warfare”<sup>10</sup> missions. However, the CH-3s were transferred to the 21<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Squadron in 1969. The 20th Special Operations Squadron, now under the moniker “The Green Hornets,” continued through the Vietnam War operating the newer UH-1F/P model, some of which were flown in the “Pony Express,” previous to the designation change. The 20th Special Operations Squadron executed numerous missions throughout the Vietnam War until decommissioned on 1 April 1972. During this time, the 21st Special Operations Squadron began replacing the older CH-3 with the newer CH-53. This aircraft greatly increased the payload and troop carrying capacity, and with minor modifications, was capable of aerial refueling<sup>11</sup> – which later would be an equipment requirement for a special operations helicopter. At the end of the Vietnam War, the helicopter fleet of the Air Force began to diminish, and the special operations squadrons began an inactive period (reestablishing on later dates). A developing mission for search and rescue began to fill the primary role of helicopters in the Air Force, which led to only minimal helicopter assets for special operations squadrons. When coordination and planning for Operation EAGLE CLAW began, Air Force special operations rotary-wing lift was comprised of only five CH-3 and eight UH-1 helicopters, and was hardly a viable option.<sup>12</sup> The coordination between the Army and Air Force in the post-Vietnam War years proved to be a positive action in the joint development phase. From the Air Force perspective, the short fall in readiness and preparation directly related to the poor envisioning requirement for special operations rotary-wing support, and greater emphasis on this requirement may have aided in the successful completion of Operation EAGLE CLAW.

On 4 November 1979, about five hundred Iranian students, followers of Shiite Muslim Cleric Ayatollah Ruhhollah Khomeinin, attacked the U.S Embassy in Tehran and captured sixty-six American hostages. In the 172 days to come, a group of Army Rangers, Delta Force, and pilots from the Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force began the planning of Operation EAGLE

CLAW. The overall “plan was to assemble eight Navy RH-53D helicopters at [a rendezvous site in the Iranian desert, named] Desert One. Under the cover of darkness, the helicopters would be refueled from C-130 tankers (also having landed at Desert One), load a 120-man Army assault team, and proceed to two additional hide sites. The Delta assault team would proceed to the U.S. Embassy, extract the hostages, rendezvous with the helicopters, and be extracted out of Tehran.”<sup>13</sup> At the end of the failed mission, eight military personnel were killed, seven helicopters destroyed or left behind, one C-130 destroyed, and all of the classified material, which included the Iranian contacts, left behind. Post-mission, former Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral James Holloway, was assigned as the chair in the investigation to appraise the Desert One tragedy.<sup>14</sup> The findings of the investigation, known as “The Holloway Commission,” cited an ad hoc composition of forces, which led to a shortfall in command and control. Also, inadequacies in training allowed for unprepared pilots who were inexperienced with new equipment and tactics.<sup>15</sup> After the Holloway Commission findings, both the Army and Air Force began training pilots to operate with the newest technology, and building its H-60 fleet to meet special operations requirements. The goal was to fulfill the requirement of Deputy Secretary of Defense, William Paul Thayer, “to develop master plans recommending SOF force structures to handle the unified commands’ requirements for special operations...”<sup>16</sup> The Air Force continued its push for a supporting special operations unit by modifying its current HH-53 helicopters, and requesting for the purchase of seventy-six CV-22 tilt-rotor aircraft.<sup>17</sup> But before the execution of this plan, the signing of the 31 Initiatives – formally known as Memorandum of Agreement on US Army - US Air Force Joint Force Development Process – and the separation of special operations rotary-wing role went into effect on 22 May 1984.

Of the 31 Initiatives, Initiative 17 directly impacted rotary-wing efforts by directing “the Air Force [to] transfer rotary-wing lift support for SOF to the Army.”<sup>18</sup> Although the Army’s

Task Force 158 (re-designated Task Force 160) was currently conducting mission, Initiative 17 finalized a helicopter-supporting role, for a predominately Army sourced ground Special Operations Force, to be sourced from the Army. The TAC-TRADOC dialogue is the primary source that justified this decision, but after Operation EAGLE CLAW, Colonel Charlie Beckwith definitely influenced the formation of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR). In preparation for the follow-up mission to Operation EAGLE CLAW, Colonel Beckwith began forming a specialized helicopter unit comprised of Army only pilots, aircrew, and equipment. The unit was composed of members and aircraft from the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and selected elements of the 158th, 229th, and 159th Aviation Battalions. “This provisional unit was at first dubbed Task Force 158 since a majority of the pilots were Blackhawk aviators detached from the 158th.”<sup>19</sup> Operations in the beginning stages were directed towards intense training, especially at night, utilizing the early AN/PVS-5 Night Vision Goggles (NVG). The unit also operated “under the cover of a supplemental battalion to the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) to maintain its secrecy. After almost two years of training, the 160th Aviation Battalion was activated on 16 October 1981. Just as the 20th and 21st Special Operations Squadrons of the Air Force, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment completed missions in the “special” realm of operations. However, not until the establishment of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), on 16 April 1987 did the aviation elements from the Army and Air Force assume their role under United States Code, Title 10.

### ***Contentions Against a Marine Special Operations Helicopter Unit***

Throughout the history of Special Operations Forces contentions have plagued units from conventional forces and political factions. More often than not, the psychological trice is negative until the proprietor adapts a broadening thought process. But even in the later case, the direction will most often follow a negative path. This psychological phenomenon by which

humans place greater weight to negative, rather than positive, is known as “negative bias.”<sup>20</sup> Research on social cognitions has grown enormously over the years,<sup>21</sup> but it is unknown how much of this research took place in a military setting. In David E. Kanouse’s article *Explaining Negativity Biases in Evaluation and Choice Behavior: Theory and Research*, published in 1984, he states, “Explanations of the negativity bias are many and varied. In sorting them out, it is useful to distinguish between micro-level explanations that seek to elucidate the perceptual and judgmental processes underlying the phenomenon and macro-level explanations that seek to place the phenomenon in a larger context wherein the bias makes sense.”<sup>22</sup> So does this explain why there has been so much push back against special operations forces, specifically a Marine Special Operations Helicopter Unit? It is one possible answer. However, some of the contentions expressed in the past are equally valid.

In LtCol Scott B. Clifton’s article, *A Case Against MARSOC Aviation*, he discusses four contentions against the development of a Marine Corps special operations helicopter unit: Dedication of Assets, Budget, Man Power and Career Progression, and Desire. All of his points display a level of validity, and his experience in the Marine Corps allows him to support his reasoning. Although LtCol Clifton’s article was written after the National Security Strategy (NSS), National Military Strategy (NMS), Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), and the Marine Corps Operating Concepts (MOC), newer manuals and documents are now released, which further explain how the forces can meet the strategic goal. However, all of these still have applicability in the development of a “versatile, responsive, and decisive Joint Force,”<sup>23</sup> but express broad views to direct the process. In 2011, when LtCol Clifton’s article was written, the finite details were still unknown. Now, two years later, concepts from all of the services are providing a more precise path toward the Joint Force of 2020, and the contentions from the past are succumbing to a greater priority.

The factors in standing up a squadron consist of many challenges. Of these, the sourcing of aircraft is usually the first on any planner's mind. Like the Army, in the development of the 160th Special Operation Aviation Regiment, the Marine Corps will need to develop creative ways to source the aircraft. In early 2011, the Marine Light Attack Helicopter and Marine Heavy Helicopter communities were short more than three squadrons of aircraft.<sup>24</sup> Directly attributed to the replacement of older airframes, this problem is quickly resolving as the fleet sources newer aircraft. However, the sentiment from many is that Marine Special Operations will draw the aircraft required from the existing fleet, and "further exacerbate the shortfall"<sup>25</sup> in conventional squadrons of the Marine Aircraft Groups. Accordingly, sourcing a new aircraft, as opposed to reallocating aircraft, is noted as "a bridge too far."<sup>26</sup> So, does this drive the transition of current squadrons, reestablishing them to MARSOC and SOCOM, when the previous overall goal was to have three balanced Marine Expeditionary Forces? This may be one option in a group of many, which could allow for the significant lightening of the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF).<sup>27</sup>

No procurement of personnel and equipment or the establishment of new "capabilities" can be accomplished without budgetary planning, which is the Marine Special Operations Helicopter Squadron's most prominent obstacle. The debate has many factors contributing to the overall monetary alignment. The first being the direction of both "Green" and "Blue" dollars to fund a special operations squadron. With the current budget crisis and the looming sequestration, "the funds for MARSOC Aviation would come at the cost of other Marine units/squadrons," and it is unrealistic to assume that the Marine Corps could appropriate funds from the special operations Major Force Program-11 (MFP-11) funds, without resistance from inside the Marine Corps or the special operations community.<sup>28</sup> The resistance is already evident, and some Marines feel that without a major budgeting plan, the Marine Corps would "risk precious

assets and personnel we cannot afford to lose.”<sup>29</sup>

During the first years of Marine Special Operations Command, Marines were slated for a five-year rotation. In order to allow these Marines to progress in their career, they were required to “rotate” to a new command or billet. The emphasis placed on Manpower and Career Progression was meant to allow the Marines the best opportunity for promotion. However, most of the “operators” wanted to remain with Marine Special Operations Command, and the command found the experience of these Marines indispensable. In efforts to “embrace MARSOC,” the Commandant signed into effect a designated Military Operational Specialty (MOS) for enlisted Marines in MARSOC, and established a closed loop for their career path. This transition to a designated closed loop career path is another contingency against a Marine Special Operations Helicopter Squadron. The fate of an officer that remains in a single unit is not promising. Over the years, a specific career path has been established, and if an aviator does not adhere to this path, the end may not be desirable. Sentiments in the aviation community also feel that with a long tour in a special operations squadron, the Marine Corps would gain a very proficient MARSOC pilot, but it would come at the cost of the “full-spectrum MAGTF officer.”

<sup>30</sup> Finally, fear of the conventional squadrons losing their most highly qualified pilots to source a special operations squadron is the most prominent contention facing the manpower issue.

Most of the above contentions directly relate to the Desire of the Marine Corps, all of which could be argued by those who keep an experimental and open mindset. Some will use the same argument, that the Marine Corps fought during the post World War II era, “Why do we need a second land Army?” This philosophy also came to bare during the formation of Marine Special Operations Command, from both inside and outside of the Marine Corps, when some asked, “Why does SOCOM need another land force?” Now, the development of a special operations aviation unit is experiencing the same type of pro and con desires.

If the need (or desire) for Marine Special Operations Command is to aid Special Operations Command by contributing additional capacity in order to meet the expanding demands for its special operations ground forces, then the same is true about a Marine Special Operations Helicopter Squadron. The desire against the formation of a new squadron is debatable, and the overall strategic goal needs to be the proving ground for the viability of a special operations squadron. When budgetary roadblocks effect the decision, then the priority of the special operations squadron should be ranked among other programs. If, “we need to get smaller to stay strong...[and] be even more joint, advancing interdependence and integrating new capabilities,”<sup>31</sup> then the exploration of restructuring manpower and current task organization is in order. This will aid to “rebalance our Corps, posture it for the future, and aggressively experiment with and implement new capabilities and organizations.”<sup>32</sup>

### **Supporting Cases and Theories**

The Department of Defense is in the initial phase of planning for restructuring to a lighter, leaner, and more capable joint force. The uncertain environment projected in the next few decades, along with the lower budget, is directing the Joint Chiefs of Staff to create innovative solutions while rebalancing its policy, doctrine, and capabilities in order to support the following six key missions:

- Defend the United States and support civil authorities at home
- Succeed in counterinsurgency, stability, and counterterrorism operations
- Build the security capacity of partner states
- Deter and defeat aggression in anti-access environments
- Prevent proliferation and counter weapons of mass destruction
- Operate effectively in cyberspace.<sup>33</sup>

Derived from the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), the above missions are set as a focusing



point for special attention. Among these, emphasis for a stronger and larger Special Operations Force is an overriding subject in all documents and directives for the strategic goal. In 2007, The Center for Strategic and International Studies found that, “[The] rotary-wing fleet requires recapitalization of an aging force...,” and that “[The organization] was developed for an earlier era and not for the high SOF demand of the post-9/11 world.”<sup>34</sup> Now, the Marine Corps and Special Operations Command are calling for an increase in special operations man power in order to prepare for the strategic needs of the Department of Defense. This will increase the requirement for aviation support, and the already over tasked Army Special Operations Aviation Regiment will need support. Just as Marine Special Operations Command is an aid to the overall special operations ground force, the Marine Special Operations Helicopter Squadron will aid the aviation realm of Special Operations Command. Further, Marine Special Operations Teams – known as bringing many organic capabilities to the operating area – will add another organic capability to their repertoire.

For the benefit of acquisition, the Marine Corps can utilize a model reminiscent of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment – known as Task Force 158 at the time – prior to Operation HONEY BADGER.<sup>35</sup> When preparing for the mission, Colonel Charlie Beckwith’s notion of service integrity fostered the development with assets from already established Army units. As stated earlier, Colonel Beckwith pulled aircraft, pilots, aircrew, and maintainers from the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and selected elements of the 158th, 229th, and 159th Aviation Battalions. Using a technique/ plan such as this would obviously not settle well in the traditionalist view of many aviation units in the Marine Corps. The current state of the military as a whole – budget reduction and preparation for new concepts – seeks to “protect the broad range of U.S. national security interests, advance the Department’s efforts to rebalance and reform, and supports the national security imperative of deficit reduction through a lower level of

defense spending.<sup>36</sup> With emphasis on *rebalance and reform*, as stated in every guide from the National Security Strategy to the Marine Corps Operating Concepts, this directed and required action will require support from the traditionalist view. Just as the Army's Special Operations Aviation Regiment, the initial formation should not establish a full squadron with all requiring Task Organization (T/O) assets. Rather, the Task Organization should be set, and the assets and personnel be filled to a level of operational capability. Marine Corps squadrons typically operate in a "below T/O" realm, and successfully complete training requirements and Fleet Support. By remaining at an established minimal requirement, fewer assets will be required to be "chopped" from the supporting squadrons. In turn, the supporting squadrons will remain at a level in which they can continue to train personnel, support the conventional forces, and reduce the overall cost in maintenance. Of course, this does not come without the need to adjust previous operational and training plans, especially after the past ten years of consistent Pre-deployment Training Program (PTP) requirements. But now as we adjust to prepare for the future uncertain environment, priorities for restructure and reallocation should be set, and the rebalance of the aviation forces will negate the shortfalls in the Marine Aircraft Group.

Arguments can be made that the overall strategic goal is primarily based on monetary issues and support. Running the Department of Defense requires a mass amount of financial backing. In the Fiscal Year 13 base budget (excluding Overseas Contingency Operations), only eight percent of the 525.4 billion dollars was allotted to the Marine Corps. To assist the overall budgetary reductions, "the Marine Corps will eliminate one infantry regiment headquarters, five infantry battalions (four active and one reserve), one artillery battalion, four Tactical Air squadrons (three active and one reserve), and one combat logistics battalion."<sup>37</sup> The Department of the Navy expenditures will reduce an excess of 5.7 billion dollars.<sup>38</sup> These budgetary reduction initiatives drove a Naval "review that included a thorough assessment of its FY 2013

readiness programs. The objective of this effort was capturing costs of certain infrastructure and support functions in the budget, and reinvesting these resources into critical warfighting elements within the Navy and Marine Corps.”<sup>39</sup> Although the 2013 budget already allocates the realignment of funds to designated factions throughout the Department of the Navy, future fiscal year plans should look at implicating funds for a Marine Special Operations Squadron. As listed in the Department of Defense’s white paper, entitled “Defense Budget Priorities and Choices,” rationale for changes came from direct guidance of the President of the United States strategic tenets. Of these tenets, “No longer [sizing] active forces to conduct large and protracted stability operations while retaining the expertise of a decade of war,” supports the notion of smaller squadrons in the Marine Air Group. Reducing these squadrons by “chopping” assets to a special operations squadron – similar to the “chopping” of assets to a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) Air Combat Element (ACE) – meets multiple elements of the strategic guidance, which includes budgetary reductions of conventional forces, smaller leaner conventional forces, and structures forces for reversal or for regeneration of capabilities if future circumstances change.<sup>40</sup> However, the formation of a new squadron will require additional monetary requirements, but this funding can be kept at a minimal level through use of current assets and joint collaborations with Army and Air Force special operations aviation units.

In the past, successful pilot and aircrew progression has been limited to an unwritten law that typically follows a designated path. If the respective Marine does not follow this path then they will be condemned to an unsuccessful career. Manpower requirements for a Marine Special Operations Squadron place emphasis on highly trained personnel, such as current Weapons and Tactics Instructors (WTI). The notion is not viable, that conventional squadrons would, “invest in [a] pilot and then [that pilot] leaves for MARSOC,” and in turn, “the squadron gains nothing in return.”<sup>41</sup> The pilot or aircrew man is required to give two years of service back to the

squadron, after attending the Weapons and Tactics Instructor course by Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron One (MAWTS-1). Once this two-year fulfillment is met, the Weapons and Tactics Instructor would have been in the squadron between three to four years. At this point, it is usually time to execute a secondary tour – known as a “B Tour” – which is where a tour with a Marine Special Operations Squadron would fall. A “B tour” with Marine Special Operations Command would require a five-year commitment to allow for training, expertise to foster, and for Marine Special Operations Command to gain a return on its investment. This would also allow for multiple supporting missions with the Marine Special Operations Regiment (MSOR) and subordinate units and teams. Eventually, accepting a tour with a Marine Special Operations Squadron will require the development of a specific Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) assignment. After the initial establishment of Marine Special Operations Command, enlisted Marines were required to be in Marine Special Operations Command for five years. This tour was not “closed loop” so the Marines had to move on to other occupational areas. In January 2011, the Commandant approved the proposed Primary Military Occupational Specialty (PMOS) with a “closed loop” for enlisted special operations Marines. Conversely, the officers also received a dedicated Free Military Occupational Specialty (FMOS), which does not receive the same “closed loop” designation as the enlisted special operations Marines. For aviators and aircrew to retain the expertise in the special operations field, it should follow the same model as the Marine Special Operations Command enlisted personnel. Allowing this, will equally add the future “thickening” of the force at manning levels sufficient to staff training lanes and schools, while meeting critical operational mission sets.”<sup>42</sup> Designating a “closed loop” Primary Military Occupational Specialty permits pilots and aircrew to gain cohesiveness between themselves and the operators on the ground. In turn, the efficiency and effectiveness of the Marine air-ground team increases, which will better support Special

Operations Command.

**Support for the Strategic Goal**

In February 2010, an initiative to reform the military into a smaller, leaner, capable fighting force, capable to “prevail in today’s wars, prevent and deter conflict, prepare to defeat adversaries and succeed in a wide range of contingencies, and preserve and enhance the All-Volunteer Force,”<sup>43</sup> in a changing and uncertain environment. Much of the emphasis is placed on the Special Operations Forces between all service branches. In a Posture Statement given before 112th Congress Senate Armed Services Committee, Admiral William H. McRaven stated, “SOF are particularly well-suited to respond to this rapidly changing environment, and I fully expect the operational demands placed upon SOF to increase across the next decade, and beyond.”<sup>44</sup> The Marine Corps Operating Concepts and the Army-Marine Corps Concept of *Gaining and Maintaining Access*, both note the operational demands and predominance on Special Operations Forces. With this emphasis, the Vice Commander of United States Special Operations Command, Air Force Lieutenant General Bradley Heithold, noted the increasing need for support when he stated, “Mobility is going to be key. Aviation is going to be critical to us in some very large theaters.”<sup>45</sup> From multiple spectrums, the need for special operations helicopter support grows, especially in preparation for the Joint Force of 2020.

“The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review supports 165 tilt-rotor and fixed-wing mobility and fire support aircraft. It calls for the addition of a company of upgraded Chinooks to the Army’s 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment and two dedicated helicopter squadrons for direct support to naval special warfare units.”<sup>46</sup> But why no assets in the Marine Corps? Some argue that with the directions given in the strategic documents, the boost in Army, Air Force, and Navy assets meets the guidance to develop the Joint Force of 2020. In a brief given by Lieutenant General George Flynn, at the Marine Corps University, he stated that, “Redundancy

is more expensive, but redundancy allows a unit to fall back on a redundancy when things go wrong.”<sup>47</sup> Redundancy should be built into Marine Special Operations Command as well. A special operations squadron would allow Marine Special Operations Command to “fall back” onto their own indigenous squadron and continue with the mission. With this, common language and common training develops a synergy between Marines. This commonality eases training, planning and execution. A good example of this is the efficiency of the Marine Expeditionary Unit, and the rapid execution of a mission within six hours. During a question and answer forum, after the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) brief, at the Marine Corps University Command and Staff College, the question was asked, “Why don’t you take the Army and Air Force and put them on the ship with the Navy [in order to form the Air Combat Element] on the MEU?” Of all four speakers, the consensus was the same. The commonality between aviation and ground units allows for the Marine Corps to be an efficient self-supportive force, capable of successfully meeting “one or more of the four broad categories of [joint operations] activities.”<sup>48</sup> Now, with directions from the Quadrennial Defense Review, the best current plan for Marine Special Operations Command is to form a joint supported special operations “MAGTF,” with aviation assets from other services. Successful in previous missions, but not as efficient, which returns us to the key element of efficiency; a common force. This is going to be a much-needed trait in future operations, especially with the direction of the Joint Force of 2020 and the blend between General Purpose Forces (GPF) and Special Operations Forces. The philosophy that aviation support from the General Purpose Forces and from Army and Air Force Special Operations Squadrons confronts two quandaries. First, as the drawdown of General Purpose Forces continues, and the “opportunities” for Special Operations Forces – “spread out in 75 different countries”<sup>49</sup> – increases, the aviation support requirements for thinly spread General Purpose Forces and higher tasked Special Operations Forces will expand. Second, numerous

After Action Reports, documents from the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCLL), as well as the statements from the leaders of the MAGTF brief mentioned above, concludes that commonality in a unit creates a synergy for effective training, planning, and execution. Thusly, the addition of assets to both Army and Air Force special operations aviation units, as noted in the Quadrennial Defense Review, lacks sufficiency in meeting the overall strategic goal.

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta stated, “The drawdown of the post-9/11 wars will provide more opportunities for Special Operations Forces, not less, namely in the realm of training and assisting partner nations in other regions.”<sup>50</sup> As noted in the National Security Strategy, Quadrennial Defense Review, National Military Strategy, and both the Marine Corps Vision and Strategy 2025 and Commandant’s Planning Guidance, “Success requires the Joint Force to closely work with NATO [and] our coalition partners.”<sup>51</sup> Cooperation with NATO and coalition partners can come in many forms, and in relation to the strategic plan associates itself with the National Military Objectives of Counter Violent Extremism, Deter and Defeat Aggression, Strengthen International and Regional Security. In the past ten years, Special Operations Forces, have been stereotyped into a Direct Action (DA) only role. But previous to the post-9/11 wars, assistance to other nations predominately took the role of trainer and adviser. Of these roles, many of the Special Operations Forces currently execute missions directly attributing to the National Military Objectives. In the next seven years building up to the Joint Force of 2020, Special Operations Forces are expected to increase their roles in Foreign Internal Defense, Security Force Assistance, Civil Affairs, and Military Information Support Operations. With the strategic goal in mind, success for these operations will depend on Host Nation (HN) personnel. “It’s always a better scenario when a local goes through the door and puts somebody in handcuffs.”<sup>52</sup> Increasing this role will call for more assets in aviation. Army Special Operations Forces will require mobility, especially with the strategic shift to the Pacific theater.

This will task saturate both Army and Air Force Special Operations squadrons and leave Marine Special Operations Command lacking in mobility support, or vice versa. In order to create an efficient special operations atmosphere, “The future fleet should be sized to meet the planned expansion of Special Operations Forces,”<sup>53</sup> with a commonality of service forces driving to self-sufficiency. Having a Marine aviation unit to support Marine Special Operations Command will correct mobility short-falls for an the increasing special operations task load, and negate the decrease in diversity, flexibility, and versatility of becoming too interdependent.<sup>54</sup>

With the dedication of a Marine Special Operations Helicopter unit, and the need for increase special operations helicopter support, how will Marine Special Operations Command, along with their helicopters, operate in the proposed Anti Access/ Area Denial (A2AD) environment? The answer relies with the overall tasking of special operations in the Anti Access/ Area Denial spectrum. In the *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations*, Special Operations Forces are manpower limited and operations in combat, security, engagement, and relief and reconstruction are a competency of both Special Operations Forces and General Purpose.<sup>55</sup> Limitation of special operations manpower, the increase in tasking, and the noted gap in aviation assets since 2007 project a potential falter in the Anti Access/ Area Denial Concept. However, by expanding Special Operations Commands aviation assets with a Marine Corps special operations squadron will allow “multiple dispersed maneuver elements...to conduct operations in the objective area.”<sup>56</sup> In *Gaining and Maintaining Access: An Army-Marine Corps Concept*, the Central Idea explains a strategic plan utilizing multiple domains. It states:

The joint force will establish a baseline set of conditions that permit conduct of entry operations. Strategically, that includes some capabilities for intermediate staging on land or sea and overflight rights. Operationally, it requires degrading adversary area-denial capabilities sufficiently at the point of attack in multiple domains. Prior to entry, targeting information will be continuously updated on all priority targets and then focus on areas identified as likely penetration points.<sup>57</sup>



Out of this paragraph, emphasis on “Prior to Entry” operations of continuously updating targets should be address as an operation that cannot be done by Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) alone. “Pre-assault operations will include strike operations, clandestine insertion of special operations forces, and conventional reconnaissance forces...”<sup>58</sup> Accomplishing, the insertions of Special Operation Forces will take place in three complementary forms which can be diversified by traditional concepts. Marine Air Ground Task Forces will operate from ships at sea, Army forces will operate from intertheater or intratheater lift and from intermediate bases within the theater.<sup>59</sup> If this was separated into the “clandestine insertion” category, then we can assume that Marine Special Operations Command elements would conduct ship to shore maneuver with aviation assets or boats. Naval Special Warfare elements would most likely utilize the same, while Army Special Operations units would utilize air or ground movement. Once ashore or in the operating area, the requirement for maneuver still remains. With the high requirements for aviation transport of Special Operations Forces, especially in what will most likely be an austere environment that requires efficient training and planning for execution, the need for Marine Special Operations Aviation support will be of the utmost importance. To say that General Purpose Forces’ helicopter squadrons will fill this gap – most likely from the Marine Expeditionary Unit or sea-based units – will be a farce. These squadrons will most likely be conducting training and planning of their own in support of the Ground Combat Element’s entry operations. Additionally, a Marine Special Operations Helicopter Squadron will provide the required aid in maneuver and intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR). Conclusively, they will be able to provide timely and accurate organic fires – capable of providing destructive, neutralizing, and suppressive effects – with or without precision guidance, and fire support control (in the form of Forward Air Controller Airborne (FAC-A)). “[Employment of] Special Operations Forces to set conditions for entry operations and increase combat power during

subsequent operations” will require a robust helicopter structure. Only with a Marine Special Operations Helicopter Squadron will this be able to be completed with the efficiency and safety required for successful mission completion.

### **Near and Far Term Outlook**

In the next seven years, gaps in Marine Corps aviation support for Marine Special Operations Command applies most relevantly in *Assault Support Mobility* and *Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance*. Lieutenant General John Allen portrayed this need to Congress in June of 2011, when he stated, “The Military still is struggling to meet the need of Special Operations Forces...Spec-ops teams need more aircraft, surveillance capabilities, and road clearing equipment.”<sup>60</sup> As the military shifts focus to the Pacific theater, the requirement for mobility increases daily. Concisely, the need for these mobility platforms require proven, reliable, multi-faceted capabilities in order to reduce appropriations cost, lower maintenance requirements, and provide numerous mission requirements for Marine Special Operations Command units. The most probable aircraft for this situation would be a Non-Standard Aviation (NSAv) light weight easily procurable civilian aircraft, capable of long loiter times and modifications for long duration wide area Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance, able to rapidly disseminate operational information to key elements on the battlefield in support the dynamic SOF mission set.<sup>61</sup> In order for this type of aviation support to benefit special operations, it requires it to be indistinguishable from other civilian aircraft.<sup>62</sup> With this type of “camouflage,” operations in support of special operations forces can operate covertly among standard non-military aircraft. All of these traits allow for a multi-special operations role aircraft capable of Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance, Forward Air Controller Airborne (FAC(A)), and light troop transport.

Having this type of aviation assets still does not correct the gap in medium scale air mobility. Marine Special Operations Command still requires rotary-wing support to move its Special Operations Forces during all phases of the mission, whether it be Unconventional Warfare, Foreign Internal Defense, Counterterrorism, Special Reconnaissance, Direct Action, Civil Affairs Operations, Military Information Support Operations (MISO), Information Operations, or Security Force Assistance. “Clearly mobility is a very big part of [Special Operations Forces]. If [Special Operations Forces] can’t get to the target... clandestinely... and ready to fight, then we are not going to be of a lot of value.”<sup>63</sup> Recognizing the mobility gap, the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review “looked across the Department of Defense to develop solutions within SOCOM...”<sup>64</sup> In a hearing before the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities of the Committee on Armed Services House of Representatives, on the rotary-wing gap in Special Operations, Gary Reid, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Combating Terrorism, U.S. Department of Defense specified the increase in aviation assets to the Army, Air Force, and the two Naval helicopter squadrons for direct support to Naval Special Warfare (NSW).<sup>65</sup> “In 2009, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Gary Roughead authorized Commander, Naval Air Forces, to dedicate two helicopter squadrons to the cause. The “Red Wolves” of HSC-84 and the “High Rollers” of HSC-85 will support SOF missions.”<sup>66</sup> This model can be utilized in the near term until the Marine Corps is ready to fully stand up a Special Operations Helicopter Squadron. However, the personnel and assets do not have to come from the reserves alone. The squadron can utilize a combination of Selected Marine Corps Reserve (SMCR), Active Reserve (AR), and Active Duty (AD) personnel. The most significant, shift from normal operations, would be combining the reserve squadrons in order to operate as a special operations squadron not unlike the Air Combat Element of a Marine Expeditionary Unit. The Marine Corps has been training

Air Combat Elements for years during the Pre-Deployment Training Cycle. This type of specialized training should utilize Marine Special Operations Command personnel to develop the synergy that the Ground Combat Element and the Air Combat Element, of the Marine Expeditionary Unit, develop prior to deployment. In order to ensure that direct support is provided to the units and operators of Marine Special Operations Command, the squadron will require the proper documented designation. Overall, this will provide the needed mobility while easing the problems of planning for training, and eventually operating, between the ground and air elements of Marine Special Operations.

For the “Far Term Outlook,” the goal of eventually transforming the “Near Term” solution into an actual designated aviation branch of Marine Special Operations Command entails most of the previous information. Although not discussed in detail in the Expeditionary Warrior 2012 (EW12) report, the capabilities and characteristics of Special Operations Forces and General Purpose Forces were noted as having operational differences. “The Navy-Marine Corps [General Purpose Forces] team provides forward-deployed platforms, integrated aviation, manpower, firepower, trained staff planners, scalable ground reinforcements, and sustainment capabilities.”<sup>67</sup> However, with a dedicated squadron, the “integrated aviation” element could provide firepower and sustainment capabilities as well as the specialized skill sets, precision effects, and global steady state security presence required for “operational preparation of the battlespace (OPB) prior to the arrival of the main assault force.”<sup>68</sup> With this concept, the coordination with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) SOF Headquarters (NSHQ) continues to prepare for the future environment, and United States Special Operation Command is “the lead component with executive agent-like responsibilities.”<sup>69</sup> As a “vector to the future,” Joint Special Operations University professor, Richard Newton, proposes a larger role with Special Operations Aviation in NATO. He further continues that this “vector” should require

dedicated “airmen and aircraft that train to higher standards and meet the minimal qualifications for special operations aviation.”<sup>70</sup> Quantifying his notions brings an outlook to the future for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, capable of Special Operations Aviation support. A future that parallels with a Special Aviation Squadron for Marine Special Operations Command, and an interoperable supporting joint force of 2020 that aids in the overall vision and strategy for 2025.

### **Conclusion**

As forward movement progresses into the next preparation phase, “the Marine Corps stands to gain more from its USSOCOM association than the cost of its contribution.”<sup>71</sup> Even with the looming sequestration of the Department of Defense, evident requirements for experimentation of new and innovative methods, to prepare for the future complex security environment, still remain. Special Operations Forces (SOF) will greatly contribute to operations in an uncertain and increasingly competitive globalized environment. As a decrease in General Purpose Forces in the Marine Corps and a simultaneous increase of manpower in the Marine Corps Special Operations Command continues, the need for aviation support is doubled. With a dedicated Marine Special Operations Helicopter Squadron, efficiency in planning, training, and execution will provide for precise timely and accurate organic fires, direct mobility support, and reduce the command and coordination requirements for the overall mission of the joint force. Even as the Department of Defense continues its initiative in the transition to the Joint Force of 2020, reductions in the budget will continue to force innovative thinking. With a focus on filling the gap in Marine Corps Special Operations Command, with a dedicated rotary wing unit – organized, trained, equipped, and postured to rapidly deploy in support of Marine Special Operations Forces – increments to successful future missions will be met. Whether these missions are Anti Access/ Area Denial, or the various special operations missions within, a Marine Special Operations Helicopter Squadron will provide the key mobility and support for a

successful Marine Air Ground Task Force in Marine Special Operations Command. Finally, utilization of the near term outlook with the transformation to the far term outlook, the Marine Special Operations Helicopter Squadron will better prepare the Marine Corps for the strategic vision of the future.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Gen James Amos, *35<sup>th</sup> Commandant of the Marine Corps: Commandant's planning guidance*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Marine Corps, 2010), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Amos, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Fred J. Pushies, *Night Stalkers: 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Regiment (Airborne)* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2005), 15.

<sup>4</sup> LtCol Susan L. Murray, "The United States Marine Corps and Special Operations: A Nineteen Year Convergence Toward a Marine Component," (master thesis, U.S. Army War College, 2006), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Operating Concepts: Assuring Littoral Access...Proven Crisis Response*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Washington DC: Combat Development & Integration, G3/G5, 2010), 11.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>7</sup> Barry M. Blechman, et al., *Key West Revisited: Roles and Missions of the US Armed Forces in the Twenty-first Century*, (Washington DC: Henry L. Stimson Center, 1993), iii.

<sup>8</sup> Richard G. Davis, *The 31 Initiatives: A study in Air Force – Army Cooperation* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1987), 25.

<sup>9</sup> Davis, 29.

<sup>10</sup> "20th Special Operations Squadron," U.S. Air Force Website, accessed 29 December 2012, <http://www2.hurlburt.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=3500>.

<sup>11</sup> "21st Special Operations Squadron," Global Security Website, accessed 29 December 2012, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/usaf/21sos.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> LTC Kenneth R. Pribyla, "Of Helicopters and Doctrine: A Study of the Rotary Wing Lift Transfer," (master thesis, Air War College, 1989), 4.

<sup>13</sup> Pushies, 10-11.

<sup>14</sup> Murray, 3.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Pribyla, 7.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Headquarters Department of the Army and Headquarters Department of the Air Force, "Memorandum of Agreement on US Army – US Air Force Joint Force Development Process," 22 May 1984, Initiative # 17.

<sup>19</sup> "160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne)," Wikipedia Website, Accessed 29 December 2012, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/160\\_SOAR](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/160_SOAR).

<sup>20</sup> "Negativity Bias," Wikipedia Website, accessed 4 January 2013, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negativity\\_bias](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negativity_bias).

<sup>21</sup> David E. Kanouse, “Explaining Negativity Biases in Evaluation and Choice Behavior: Theory and Research,” in *Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 11, eds. Thomas C. Kinnear (Association for Consumer Research, 1984), 703-708.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 703-708.

<sup>23</sup> General Martin M. Dempsey, *Chairman’s Strategic Direction to the Joint Force* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2012), 6.

<sup>24</sup> LtCol Scott B. Clifton, “A Case Against MarSOC Aviation,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, May 2011, 39.

<sup>25</sup> Clifton, 39.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Marine Corps Operating Concepts*, 33.

<sup>28</sup> Clifton, 40.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Dempsey, 5.

<sup>32</sup> Amos, 8.

<sup>33</sup> Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review*, (Washington, DC: February 12, 2010), 2.

<sup>34</sup> Clark A. Murdock et al., “Special Operations Forces Aviation at the Crossroads,” (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007), 13.

<sup>35</sup> Operation HONEY BADGER was the subsequent operation to Operation EAGLE CLAW. Both missions were to rescue the 54 American hostages, being held captive at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, Iran. This mission was called off when all of the American hostages were released, after 444 days in captivity, on 20 January 1981.

<sup>36</sup> Department of Defense, *Defense Strategic Guidance: Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, (Washington, DC: January 2012), 1.

<sup>37</sup> Department of Defense, *Budget Request Overview*, (Washington, DC: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/ Chief Financial Officer, February 2012), 4-2.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-2.

<sup>39</sup> Headquarters Department of the Navy, *Highlights of the Department of the Navy FY 2013 Budget*, (Washington DC: Office of Budget Department of the Navy, February 2012), 4-1.

<sup>40</sup> Department of Defense, *Defense Budget Priorities and Choices*, (Washington, DC: January 2012), 4-5.

<sup>41</sup> Clifton, 40.

<sup>42</sup> Gina Cavallaro, “Amos OKs New MOS for MARSOC,” *MarineTimes.com*, February 14, 2011, <http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/2011/02/marine-marsoc-mos-approved-by-amos-021411/>.

<sup>43</sup> *Quadrennial Defense Review*, v.



<sup>44</sup> *Posture Statement of Admiral William H. McRaven, USN, Commander, United States Special Operations Command: Hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 112th Congress, March 6, 2011.

<sup>45</sup> Stew Magnuson, “Changes on the Horizon for Special Operations Command as Force Grows,” *National Defense Magazine*, May 2012, <http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/archive/2012/May/Pages/ChangesontheHorizonForSpecialOperationsCommandasForceGrows.aspx>.

<sup>46</sup> Dan Parsons, “Special Operations Boost Demand for Helicopters,” *National Defense Magazine*, May 2012, <http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/archive/2012/May/Pages/SpecialOperationsBoostDemandforHelicopters.aspx>.

<sup>47</sup> LtGen George Flynn, “Capstone Concept for Joint Operations,” (lecture, Marine Corps University, Quantico, VA, November 30, 2012).

<sup>48</sup> Department of Defense, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations*, Version 3.0, (Washington, DC: January 15, 2009), 14.

<sup>49</sup> Magnuson, “Changes on the Horizon for Special Operations Command as Force Grows,” *National Defense Magazine*, May 2012.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Department of Defense, *The National Military Strategy of the United States: 2011, Redefining America’s Military Leadership*, (Washington, DC: February 8, 2011), 5.

<sup>52</sup> Magnuson, “Changes on the Horizon for Special Operations Command as Force Grows,” *National Defense Magazine*, May 2012.

<sup>53</sup> Murdock, et al., vii.

<sup>54</sup> LtGen Flynn, lecture.

<sup>55</sup> *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations*, Ver. 3.0, 16.

<sup>56</sup> Headquarters Department of the Army and Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps. *Gaining and Maintaining Access: An Army-Marine Corps Concept*, Ver. 1.0, (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Capabilities Integration Center and Marine Corps Combat Development Command, March 2012), 7.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>60</sup> Dan Lamothe, “Former CG: MARSOC Will Grow, Get Air Assets,” *Marine Corps Times*, July 2011, <http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/2011/07/marine-marsoc.hejlik-grow-get-air-assets-072411w/>.

<sup>61</sup> “Special Operations Research, Development, and Acquisition Center (SORDAC), Areas of Interest,” USSOCOM Website, Accessed 18 January 2013, <http://www.socom.mil/sordac/Pages/AreasOfInterest.aspx>.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Magnuson, “Changes on the Horizon for Special Operations Command as Force Grows,” *National Defense Magazine*, May 2012.

<sup>64</sup> *Closing the Gap: Addressing Critical Rotary Wing Shortfalls for U.S. Special Operations Forces in Fiscal Year 2011 and Beyond: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities of the Committee on Armed Services House of Representatives*, 111th Cong. 2 (2010) (Gary Reid, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Combating Terrorism, U.S. Department of Defense), 4.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> “Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 85 Supports Navy SEAL Missions,” Brandon Webb, SOFREP Website, Accessed 18 January 2013, <http://sofrep.com/2320/helicopter-sea-combat-squadron-85-supports-navy-seal-missions/>.

<sup>67</sup> Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, *Expeditionary Warrior 2012: EW12 Final Report*, (Washington, DC: Wargaming Division, Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, 23 July 2012), 16.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Posture Statement of Admiral William H. McRaven*, 2.

<sup>70</sup> Richard Newton, “Special Operations Aviation in NATO: A Vector to the Future,” in JSOU Report 06-8, (Hurlburt Field, FL: The JSOU Press, 2006), 12.

<sup>71</sup> LtCol Mark A. Clark, “Should the Marine Corps Expand Its Role in Special Operations,” (Strategy Research Project, U.S. Army War College, 2003), 43.

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